

For Immediate Release

Utah's Seat Belt Use Rate Increases 4.5%

September Click It or Ticket Campaign Focuses on the 12% of Utahns Who Still Don't Buckle Up

SALT LAKE CITY (September 12, 2016) - It's been just over a year since Utah's primary seat belt law went into effect in May of 2015. The results from Utah's annual seat belt observational survey, conducted by the Utah Department of Public Safety's Highway Safety Office, showed an increase of 4.5% since the primary law took effect, for an overall usage rate of 87.9%. The survey shows progress is being made in getting motorists to buckle up, but there is still work to be done to get all Utahns to buckle up.

To that end, law enforcement agencies throughout Utah began working Click It or Ticket seat belt enforcement shifts on September 2nd. The increased enforcement effort, which involves more than 35 agencies working more than 700 overtime shifts, continues until September 16th. Officers are stopping and educating motorists who aren't wearing a seat belt.

"Our troopers and other first responders see the consequences of crashes every day," said Utah Highway Patrol Colonel Michael Rapich. "Whether or not someone was buckled up can mean the difference between surviving a crash, or not going home. We'll be out focusing on educating unbuckled motorists, because our goal is for everyone to get home safely and our work isn't over until we reach Zero Fatalities."

The seat belt survey showed that pick up truck occupants had the lowest seat belt usage rate at 76.6% and that males buckled up less often than females, in both urban and rural areas of the state. Visit <http://highwaysafety.utah.gov> for detailed information about the survey results, including county- and vehicle-specific information.

In May of 2015, wearing a seat belt while driving became a primary enforcement law in Utah. In other words, drivers can no be pulled over solely for not wearing a seat belt.

Last year 278 people died in fatal collisions on Utah roads and highways, and nearly one third (87) of them were not restrained. Buckling up is one of the best ways to decrease injuries and deaths in motor vehicle crashes. Seat belts reduce the risk of injury and death by about 50% when used correctly, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Seat belts are the single most effective traffic safety device for preventing injury and death. Of the 1,000 people who died on

Utah's roads over the past five years, not buckling up was one of the most common contributing factors.

The Utah Department of Public Safety's Click It or Ticket Campaign is conducted in partnership with the Utah Department of Transportation and Zero Fatalities Program. It is a high visibility enforcement campaign that involves law enforcement statewide. Visit <http://clickitutah.org> for more information on Utah's seat belt laws.

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Media Contact:
Trooper Lawrence Hopper
Utah Highway Patrol
801-518-0949
lhopper@utah.gov